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Statistical implications of the follow-up to recent major United Nations conferences

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its twenty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission endorsed the minimum national social data set (MNSDS), as recommended by its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, with the substitution of the indicator "Contraceptive prevalence rate" in place of the indicator "Percentage of infants weighing less than 2,500 g at birth, by sex".

2. The United Nations Statistics Division is undertaking work to implement MNSDS through the following activities:

(a) Letters were sent to countries and to United Nations bodies and other international organizations, informing them of MNSDS and its use in responding to the needs highlighted in the global conferences to collect and present more and better data describing progress for individual countries;

(b) MNSDS is being prepared on a trial basis for dissemination on the Statistics Division home page maintained on the United Nations Headquarters World Wide Web site. The data set will use only data reported by countries, with no projections or synthetic data;

(c) The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is using MNSDS as a suggested framework for the sociodemographic portion of its proposed general data dissemination system. The United Nations Statistics Division participated in a country analysis mission in Sri Lanka in 1997 to assess the quality, adequacy and timeliness of disseminated data related to MNSDS.

3. The Statistics Division will prepare a report on the implementation and use of MNSDS for the thirtieth session of the Statistical Commission, pursuant to the conclusions of the twenty-ninth session of the Commission. The report will be based on the trial compilation of MNSDS, using only data reported by countries. It will indicate the series that are complete at the international level, and will provide information on the series that have not been collected at the international level, the number of countries and the timeliness of data for the series that have been collected, and the lessons learned in compiling those data.

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